

## BIGGLESWADE RURAL DISTRICT

## ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1944

- of the -

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

- and -

SANITARY INSPECTOR

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

C.A. HARVEY, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Chief Sanitary Inspector:

H.W. PRIDMORE, Cert. S.I.B., M.S.I.A., M.R. San.I.  
as Sanitary Inspector and Meat and Foods Inspector.

Additional Sanitary Inspector:

\* D.W. POPE, M.S.I.A., Cert. S.I.B., as Sanitary Inspector

Temporary Additional Sanitary Inspector:

R.B. BOLL, Cert. S.I.B., M.S.I.A., as Sanitary Inspector.

Meat Inspector:

J.J.E. JONES

(Left - November, 1944)

H. INGRAM

(Appointed - November, 1944)

General Assistant:

\* P.E. MILLER

Clerks:

MISS R.P. TOLMAN and MISS D. SENIOR

\* On active service.



(2)

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS  
of the  
BIGGLESWADE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES and GENTLEMEN, -

I beg to submit the Annual Report upon the Health and Sanitary Circumstances for the Biggleswade Rural District for the year 1944.

The health statistics compare favourably with those for the whole country. There was no epidemic of infectious disease, the number of cases of Scarlet Fever, Measles and Whooping Cough notified being less than in 1943. There was however a slight increase in the cases of Diphtheria, and, in this connection, I would like to stress the importance of immunisation as a preventive against Diphtheria, none of the cases notified having had this protection.

I wish to express my thanks to the Clerk to the Council for his willing assistance and also to my colleagues and staff at Ladbroke for their helpful co-operation at all times.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

C. A. HARVEY.

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (in acres) .....	49,152
Registrar-General's estimate of Population .....	21,900
Number of inhabited houses end of 1944 according to Rate Books	5,866
Rateable Value .....	98,854
Sum represented by a penny rate .....	£415.6.5d.

VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR

<u>LIVE BIRTHS:</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate .....	203	173	376
Illegitimate .....	15	11	26

Birth Rate, 18.3 per 1,000 civilian population.

<u>STILL BIRTHS:</u>	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate .....	9	11	20
Illegitimate .....	-	1	1

Still Birth Rate, 0.96 per 1,000 civilian population.

	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
<u>DEATHS:</u> .....	115	131	246

Death Rate, 11.2 per 1,000 civilian population.

Deaths from diseases and accidents of pregnancy  
and child birth:

From Sepsis ..... 0  
From other causes .. 0

Total. 0

DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE:

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate .....	11	5	16
Illegitimate .....	1	2	3

Rate for all infants per 1,000 live births ..... 47.0  
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age) ..... 7.4  
per 1,000 live births.

(4)

CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>
Diphtheria.	-	2
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System.	9	6
Other forms of Tuberculosis.	1	3
Influenza.	1	-
Cancer of Bronchial cavity etc.	-	3
" of stomach and duodenum.	3	6
" of breast.	-	3
" of all other sites.	10	8
Diabetes.	1	2
Intra-cranial vascular lesions.	10	15
Heart disease.	22	40
Other diseases of circulatory system.	4	7
Bronchitis.	10	3
Pneumonia.	7	3
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum.	2	-
Diarrhoea (under 2 years).	1	2
Appendicitis.	-	1
Other digestive diseases.	3	4
Nephritis.	3	3
Premature births.	2	2
Congenital malformation, birth injuries, etc.	3	2
Suicide.	2	-
Road Traffic accidents.	4	2
Other violent causes.	4	1
All other causes.	13	13
Total:	<u>115</u>	<u>131</u>



- STATISTICAL TABLE 1939 - 1944 -

Year.	DEATH RATE		BIRTH RATE		INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE	
	Biggleswade R.D.	England & Wales	Biggleswade R.D.	England & Wales	Biggleswade R.D.	England & Wales
1939	9.9	12.1	12.2	15.0	42.6	50
1940	11.07	14.3	14.51	14.6	48.78	55
1941	13.6	12.9	14.56	14.2	37.04	59
1942	10.4	11.6	15.5	15.8	59.4	49
1943	11.4	12.1	15.7	16.5	19.5	49
1944	11.2	11.6	18.3	17.6	47.0	46

Section B. - GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICESBACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS

Arrangements are made whereby medical men practising in the district can obtain free Bacteriological Examinations in cases of Diphtheria, Typhoid Fever and Meningitis. These examinations are carried out at the Bedford County Hospital.

PROVISION OF ANTITOXIN

Practitioners in the district can obtain a free supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin. It is kept at the Council Offices and at the Isolation Hospital, Potton Road, Biggleswade.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES

- (a) Infectious Cases. - A motor ambulance is provided by the Joint Hospital Board, and is stationed at the Hospital.
- (b) Non-Infectious and Accident cases. - An ambulance maintained jointly by the Biggleswade Rural District Council, Biggleswade Urban District Council, and the Sandy Urban District Council is stationed at Biggleswade and serves the area under the control of the three Councils. This service was on occasion supplemented by ambulances of the Civil Defence.

NURSING IN THE HOME

None provided by this Authority, but the County Council employ a Health Visitor for certain work.

Many of the Parishes have the services of a district nurse.

MIDWIVES

Registration and supervision exercised by the County Council.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES UNDER THE COUNTY COUNCILCHILD WELFARE CENTRES

Arlesey.  
 Biggleswade.  
 Potton.  
 Shefford.  
 Stotfold.

ANTE-NATAL and POST NATAL CLINICS

Shefford.  
 Stotfold.  
 Biggleswade.

TUBERCULOSIS

St. Andrews Rooms, Biggleswade.

VENEREAL DISEASES

Bedford County Hospital

MATERNITY and NURSING HOMES.

The Local Supervising Authority is the County Council.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREAWATER SUPPLY

Water is supplied to the area by the Biggleswade Water Board and has proved very satisfactory in quality and quantity. Samples were taken periodically during the year and the result of the latest analysis is given below.

Owing to the increased amount of water used in the area during the summer period a slight curtailment in the supply was necessary especially during the night. This was not due to any reduction in the amount of water being pumped to the reservoirs, but to the demand exceeding the pumping capacity.

CHEMICAL RESULTS IN PARTS PER 100,000WATER SUPPLY

Appearance .....	Bright - very slight flocculent deposit of mineral and organic debris.
Colour .....	Normal
Odour .....	Nil
Reaction pH Neutral .....	7.2
Free Carbonic Acid .....	2.3
Electric conductivity at 20°C .....	545
Total solids, dried at 100°C .....	36.5
Chlorine in Chlorides .....	2.0
Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate .....	25.0
Hardness : Total .....	30.0
Temporary .....	23.0
Permanent .....	7.0
Nitrogen in Nitrates .....	0.00
Nitrites .....	0.001
Free Ammonia .....	0.0072
Albuminoid Ammonia .....	0.0000
Oxygen Absorbed in 4 hours at 27°C .....	0.010
Metals .....	Iron: 0.020
Free Chlorine .....	Absent

Bacteriological Results

Number of Colonies per cubic centimetre or millilitre  
of water growing upon Agar at 37°C. in 1 day .....0

Number of Colonies per cubic centimetre or millilitre  
growing upon Agar at 37°C. in 2 days .....0

Number of Colonies per cubic centimetre or millilitre  
growing upon Agar at 20°C. in 3 days .....0

Smallest quantity of water producing acid and gas in  
Bile Salt Lactose Broth after 2 days incubation  
at 37°C. ....Absent 100 c.c.  
(Presumptive Bacillus Coli Test)

Smallest quantity of water containing the  
Bacillus Coli ....Absent 100 c.c.

Smallest quantity of water giving the reaction of  
the B. Welchii (Bacillus Enteritidis Sporogenes) Absent 100 c.c.

REPORT

This sample is reasonably clear and bright in appearance, neutral in reaction and free from metals apart from a negligible trace of iron. The water is hard in character but not to an excessive degree, contains no excess of salinity or mineral constituents in solution and is of a high standard of organic and bacterial purity.

These results are consistent with a pure and wholesome water suitable for drinking and domestic purposes.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

Three main sewage schemes are in operation in the parishes of Potton, Arlesey and Stotfold. In the parishes of Shefford, Henlow and Langford, night soil is collected by the Council by **Contract**, and, while this is being done satisfactorily, the provision of a sewage scheme to cover not only three parishes but others in the Rural District is a necessity which has long been recognised and one which should have post-war priority.

PUBLIC CLEANSING:

Details of the collection of household refuse in the area are given on page 13.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS:

There was only one swimming pool at an entertainments centre in the district, and these premises have been requisitioned by the Military Authorities.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS:

(a) Council Houses found to be infested	Nil
(b) Other Houses	15

Disinfestation was carried out in each case, Iawes Block and Thermo-tox disinfestators, and Zaldecide liquid being used. The process was repeated after a lapse of ten days, and all bedding was disinfected.



FACTORIES AND WORKPLACES:

No change - Routine visits have been made.

HOUSING: The housing problem is one which has unfortunately not improved during the year and while every possible effort was made to get essential repairs carried out, some delay was inevitable in the circumstances. There are many families living in most unsatisfactory dwellings and in overcrowded conditions in the district.

It is to be hoped that the Rural Housing Survey as recommended in the Hobhouse Report will be undertaken in the near future. This survey will take a very considerable amount of time and clerical work in order that the actual condition of each house may be assessed and arrangements to this end are already being made.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

MILK SUPPLY: During the year very considerable attention was given to the supervision of the milk supply in the area, 84 samples being taken and sent for examination. Of these 26 were found to be unsatisfactory and in these cases a visit to the farm was made and the matter discussed with the dairyman concerned. Subsequent samples were then found to be satisfactory. A clean milk supply can only be obtained when every care is taken as to the cleanliness of cowsheds, cows, milkers and utensils.

At the end of the year there were 62 farms registered for the production of milk. 18 persons were registered as retail purveyors of milk whilst 2 dairymen produce and retail Tuberculin Tested (Certified) Milk and 20 produce Accredited Milk.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS: Usual inspections were carried out during the year. Further details are given in the Sanitary Inspector's report.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS  
AND OTHER DISEASES

The number of cases of infectious diseases notified showed a considerable decrease being 90 as compared with 370 in 1943. This decrease was due mainly to the lessened incidence of measles and whooping cough while there were also fewer cases of scarlet fever.

Diphtheria showed a slight increase, the number of cases being 7 as compared to 3 in 1943, while, of those notified, 2 died from this disease. None of the cases had received protective inoculation.

The arrangements for immunisation against diphtheria continued as in previous years and the results were on the whole satisfactory. There is a tendency on the part of some parents, however, to delay and wait until cases of diphtheria have occurred before having their children immunised. The only wise policy is to have each child immunised between the age of 9 - 12 months and thus ensure that it is protected during that period of its life when it is most susceptible to the disease.

It was not necessary for any of the schools in the area to be closed during the year on account of infectious disease.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE - AGE GROUPS

<u>Disease</u>	<u>0-</u>	<u>1-</u>	<u>2-</u>	<u>3-</u>	<u>4-</u>	<u>5-</u>	<u>10-</u>	<u>15-</u>	<u>20-</u>	<u>35-</u>	<u>45-</u>	<u>65-</u>	<u>All ages</u>
Meningitis	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pneumonia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	1	6
Scarlet Fever	-	-	3	1	2	11	10	1	1	1	-	-	30
Jaundice	-	-	-	-	1	7	6	2	3	-	-	-	19
Whooping Cough	2	-	3	3	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	1	14
Erysipelas	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	3
Measles	-	-	2	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	-	8
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	2	1	-	-	7
Puerperal Pyrexia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Ophthalmia	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Neonatorium													
Total ..	3	1	8	4	5	25	18	4	8	6	5	3	90

TUBERCULOSISNew Cases and mortality during 1944:

<u>Age Periods</u>	<u>New Cases</u>				<u>Deaths</u>			
	<u>Respiratory</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory</u>		<u>Respiratory</u>		<u>Non-Respiratory</u>	
	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
0-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
1-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
5-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
10-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
20-	3	5	1	-	1	2	-	-
25-	2	4	-	-	2	1	-	-
35-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
45-	3	-	-	-	-	4	-	-
55-	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	-
65 and over	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Totals 1944	11	11	3	1	6	9	1	3

C. A. HARVEY

Medical Officer of Health.

Council Offices,  
Biggleswade.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTORFOR THE YEAR 1944

To the Chairman and Members of the Biggleswade Rural  
District Council

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in submitting my second Annual Report upon the work carried out by your Sanitary Inspectors during the year ending 31st December, 1944.

Unfortunately, much of the ordinary routine work of the department has of necessity, been curtailed, owing to war-time difficulties, emergency duties and shortage of staff. All essential matters have however received attention.

The following table shews the number of inspections made for all purposes.

SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS:

Dwelling-houses inspected under the Public Health or Housing Acts .....	828
Number of dwelling-houses inspected and recorded (included above) .....	246
Re-inspections and visits to works in progress .....	964
Visits to new buildings in course of erection .....	110
Inspections of factories (including bakehouses) .....	124
Inspections of Dairies and Cowsheds .....	237
Visits re infectious disease .....	49
Rooms disinfected .....	89
Visits re Rat & Mice Infestations .....	163
Miscellaneous visits (including refuse collection and Salvage and other emergency duties) .....	1382

NOTICES SERVED:

68 Intimation notices or letters in respect of 91 properties were sent and 3 Statutory notices served.

HOUSING:

Although only essential repairs were asked for, supervision involved much work and some repairs were outstanding for considerable periods - the delay being mainly due to shortage of labour and materials.

Preparations have been made for the Rural Housing Survey as recommended in the Hobhouse Report, with a view to the eventual classification of all working class dwellings into their respective categories.

It is hoped that a "Standard of Fitness" will shortly be adapted by all Rural Authorities in the County.

Certificates of Essentiality have been issued in respect of the repair of 6 houses, involving an expenditure of £1,093.



Two dilapidated cottages were converted into one house under the Housing (Rural Workers) Act, at a cost of £250.

#### NUISANCES:

Complaints of nuisances have shewn a slight increase over last year - but have again been of the usual type. All were investigated and dealt with satisfactorily.

The following works were carried out during the year:-

Sanitary improvements	.. .. .	315
(including drainage work)	.	
Nuisances abated	.. .. .	121

#### SUPERVISION OF FOOD SUPPLIES:

##### MEAT:

There is one Government Controlled Slaughterhouse in the District at which animals are slaughtered, not only for consumption in the Rural District, but also for the Urban Districts of Biggleswade and Sandy, and for manufacturing purposes in other parts of the country.

The work of inspecting the carcasses, naturally involves much time, but we are fortunate in having the services of an Assistant Inspector who is engaged full time at the Slaughter House. One hundred per cent inspection is thus ensured.

Mr. H. Ingram was appointed in November to fill vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. J. Jones who obtained a similar appointment elsewhere.

The mode of delivery of the meat to retailers' shops still leaves much to be desired, and a number of complaints regarding unsatisfactory transport and handling have been received. Reference to the officials concerned has resulted in temporary improvements being made.

The following table shews the number of animals slaughtered and inspected and the percentages found to be unfit for food:-



CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number slaughtered	1593	3637	268	1747	476
Number inspected	1593	3637	268	1747	476
<u>ALL DISEASES EXCEPT</u>					
<u>TUBERCULOSIS</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned.	3	36	-	9	28
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	132	1504	4	13	113
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis.	11.6	41.2	1.5	1.3	29.6
<u>TUBERCULOSIS ONLY.</u>					
Whole carcasses condemned	18	393	-	3	1
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	270	1361	-	-	19
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tubercul- osis.	17.9	47.6	-	-	4.2

The total weight of meat found to be unfit for human food, was as follows:-

	hons.	cwts.	qrs.	lbs.
Beef.	155	16	3	27 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mutton.	4	4	1	12
Pork.	1	10	3	27
Veal.			2	7
	157	12	3	17 $\frac{1}{4}$

KNACKERS YARDS:

There is only one Knacker's Yard in the District. One application for permission to use premises in Shefford as a Knacker's Yard was refused by the Town Planning Committee.

MILK:

Every endeavour has again been made to maintain a satisfactory standard of cleanliness, in spite of the present difficulties confronting the dairymen.

A number of complaints regarding the poor keeping qualities of the milk were received during the summer months. All were investigated and the necessary tests carried out. In many instances it was found that customers who are away at work all day, left receptacles for the milk outside, which were not removed to a cool storage place until their return from work.

Eighty four samples of milk were submitted for examination of which 58 were satisfactory.

During the year two applications for Registration as Cowkeeper and Dairymen and one as Retail Purveyor of Milk, were received and approved.

OTHER FOODS:

Frequent visits are paid to other food shops and places where food is prepared. As a result of these visits, the following was found to be unfit for human consumption:-

Chopped Ham	12 lbs	Lard	1 lbs.
Currants	14 "	Tea	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Bacon	550 "	Marmalade	6 "
Fish	3845 "	Sausages	6 "
Eggs	41		
Various other foodstuffs 262 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.			

The total weight of the above is 2 tons. 2 cwt. 0 qrs. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.

REFUSE COLLECTION:

The removal of household refuse in the parishes of Langford, Henlow and Shefford, continues to be carried out in a satisfactory manner by direct labour. Night Soil is also removed from these parishes. The Council provides the vehicle and the labour is by contract.

In February of this year, the Council purchased a new cesspool emptier which is used for the removal of night soil and the emptying of cesspools. The work is thus carried out speedily, efficiently and with the minimum of annoyance to the public.

In other parishes the arrangements are as follows:-

<u>Parish.</u>	<u>Collection</u>	<u>Method</u>
Arlesey.	All household refuse.	Direct labour.
Stotfold.	Tins etc. only.	Contract.
Potton.	All household refuse.	"

In the remaining parishes, enclosures have been made on suitable sites for householders to deposit their refuse, which is removed from the enclosures at regular intervals.

SALVAGE:

In spite of every effort being made to maintain the collection of salvage, the monthly returns have unfortunately shewn a marked decrease during the year. 129½ tons. of various materials were collected and sold for approximately £610. 0s. 0d.

Another book and rag drive was held during September. The result was very satisfactory and reflected great credit on all who assisted. 63,283 books and 4 tons. 17 cwts. 1 qr. 14 lbs. of rags were collected.

RAT & MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919:

Early in the year, the Ministry of Food intimated that to deal adequately with infestation, it would be necessary for Local Authorities to set up their own organisation for the purpose and urged that personnel be recruited to carry out this work in the Workable Area comprising Biggleswade and Sandy Urban Districts and the Rural District,

Accordingly, a Rodent Operator was appointed in May and he commenced duties in the Urban Districts. By the end of the year under review he had carried out the following work in this district:-

Number of premises visited.	1756
Infestations found.	41
Infestations dealt with.	41
Estimated number of rats killed.	1642

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE:

The works and plant at Arlesey, Stotfold and Potton, have been maintained in a satisfactory condition throughout the year. The pumps at Arlesey and Stotfold are electrically driven whilst those at Potton are driven by Diesel Engines.

The consumption of electricity at Arlesey and Stotfold has been as follows:-

	Main Station. Average per day.		Sub Station. Average per day.	
Arlesey.	11,843	32.44	4,161	11.40
Stotfold.	8,504	23.29	5,811	15.92

The engines at Potton have worked 1726 hours an average per day of 4 hrs. 43 mins.

RAINFALL:

Rainfall is recorded at Arlesey, Potton and Stotfold Sewage Works.

The average rainfall for the year was 16.81 inches.

DITCHES:

111½ chains of ditches for which the Council are responsible, have been cleansed during the year at a total cost of £80.

Many complaints have been received regarding the unsatisfactory condition of the open ditch to which several house drains are connected, in High Street, Blunham, and in spite of frequent cleansings, it has been impossible to avoid a nuisance, which has been aggravated by the lack of water for flushing purposes, normally available from the river.



Negotiations were in progress at the end of the year, with the Catchment Board, with a view to certain works being carried out to relieve the nuisance.

#### NEW BUILDINGS:

During the year 24 plans in respect of 25 buildings were deposited and approved and the following were completed:-

<u>New Buildings</u>		<u>Alterations and Additions</u>	
Agricultural Stores	5	To dwellinghouses	4
Garages	3	To workplaces	1
Canteens & Cloakrooms	2		
Tool Stores	2		
Hangar	1		
Fellmongers Shop	1		

Five other plans were submitted but not approved.

#### CONCLUSION:

I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Council, the Clerk and Medical Officer of Health, for their consideration and support, and also to the staff of the Public Health Department for their loyal co-operation.

Your Obedient Servant,

H.W. PRIDMORE.

Sanitary Inspector.

Council Offices,  
Biggleswade.